



US008676010B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Congdon, II et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,676,010 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 18, 2014**

(54) **ELECTRICAL CABLE WITH OPTICAL FIBER**

(75) Inventors: **Herbert Virgil Congdon, II**, Conover, NC (US); **Richard Walter Speer**, Kernersville, NC (US); **Keith Wayne Hoover**, High Point, NC (US)

(73) Assignee: **Tyco Electronics Corporation**, Berwyn, PA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 194 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/177,318**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 6, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2013/0011106 A1 Jan. 10, 2013

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G02B 6/44 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **385/101**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 385/101
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,026,141 A 6/1991 Griffiths
5,268,971 A 12/1993 Nilsson et al.

5,283,429 A 2/1994 Campolo
5,557,698 A 9/1996 Gareis et al.
5,913,003 A * 6/1999 Arroyo et al. 385/101
6,687,437 B1 2/2004 Starnes et al.
2004/0071382 A1 4/2004 Rich et al.
2004/0114888 A1 6/2004 Rich et al.
2009/0304322 A1 * 12/2009 Davies et al. 385/12

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

DE 8515470 U1 2/1986
WO WO2005114285 A1 12/2005

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Ryan Lepisto

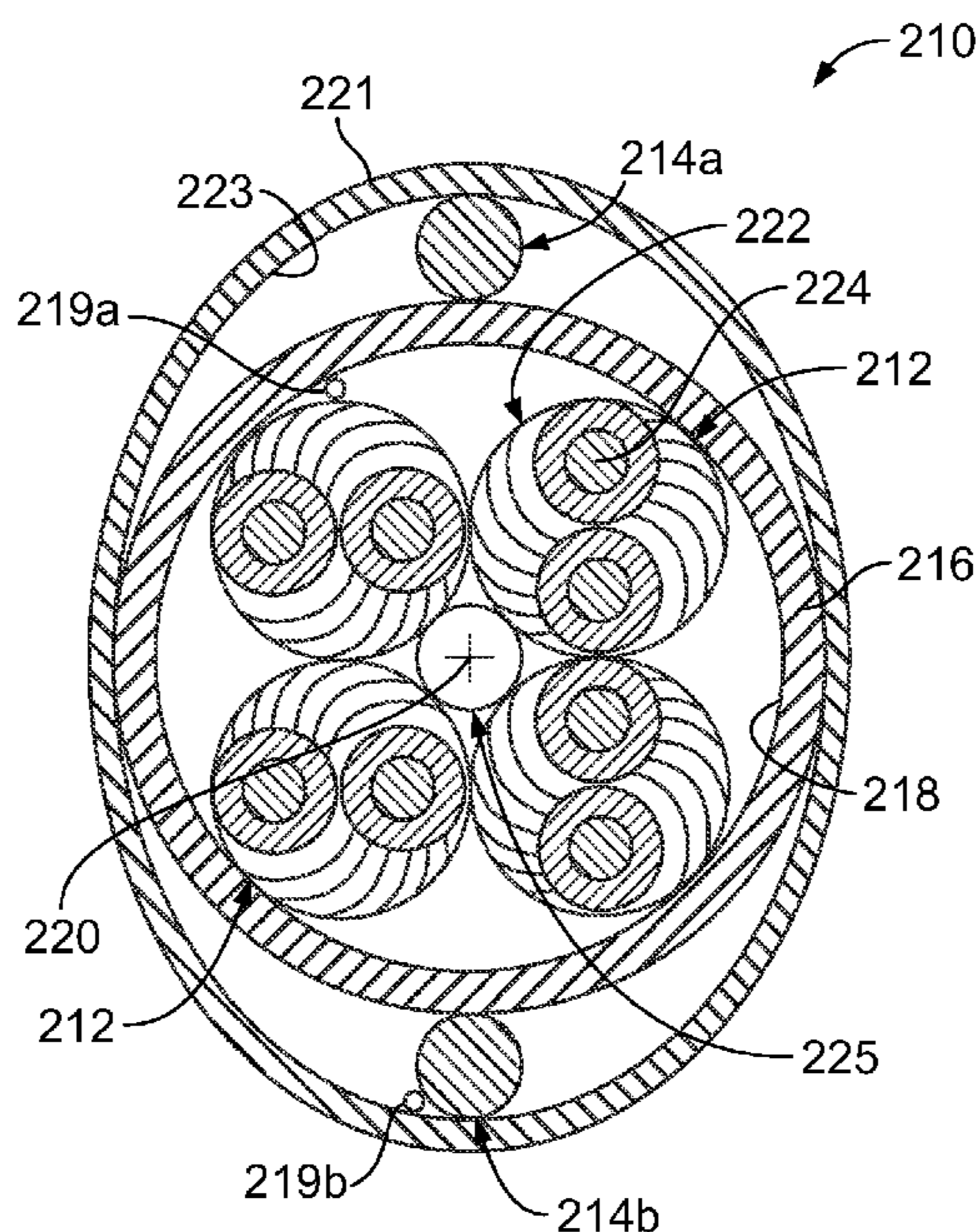
Assistant Examiner — Jerry Blevins

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Merchant & Gould P.C.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An electrical cable includes a cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the cable jacket. Twisted pairs of insulated electrical conductors extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. Each twisted pair includes two insulated conductors twisted together in a helical manner. At least two optical fibers extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. The optical fibers are independently held within the internal passageway of the cable jacket relative to each other.

16 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



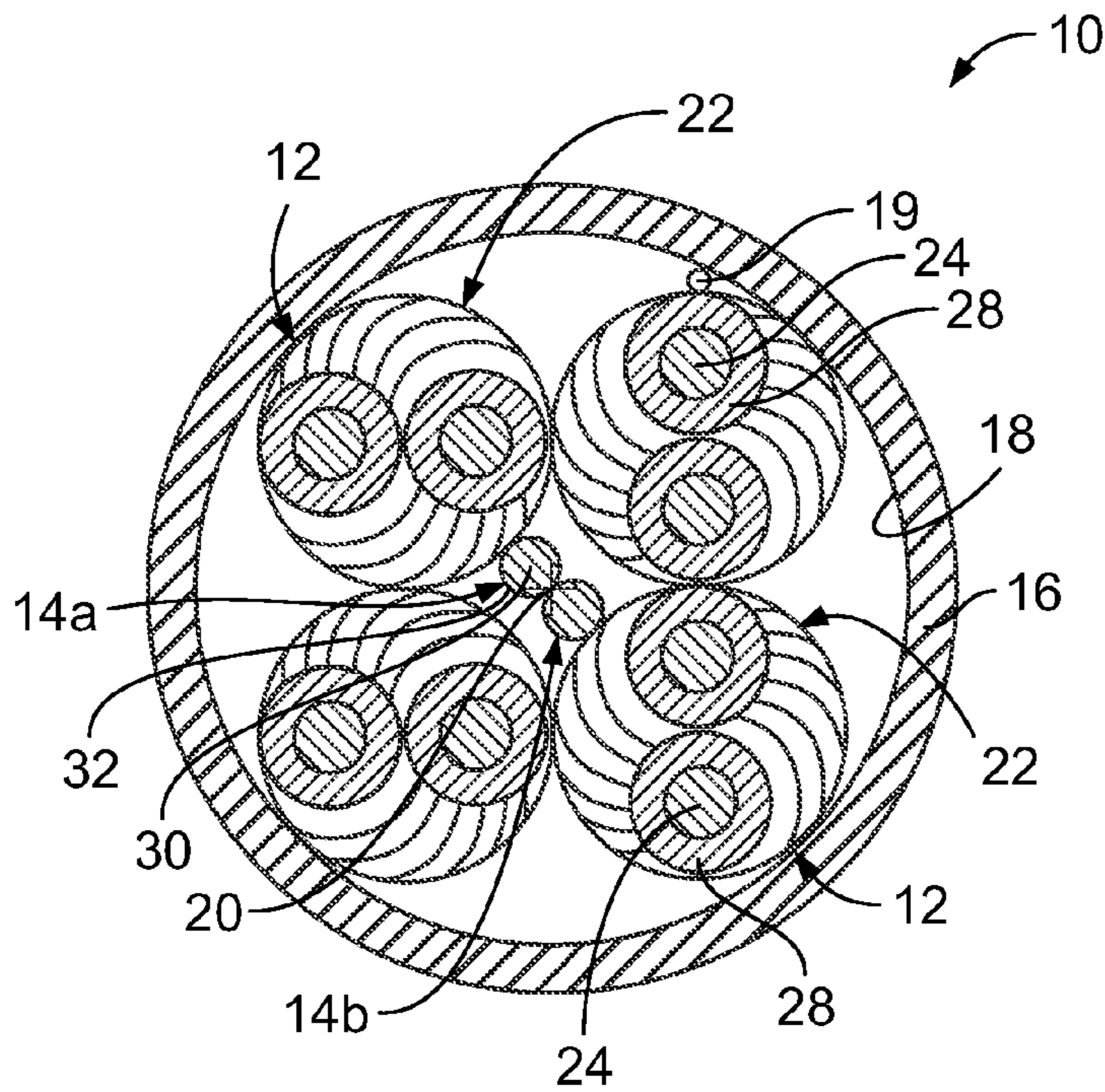


FIG. 1

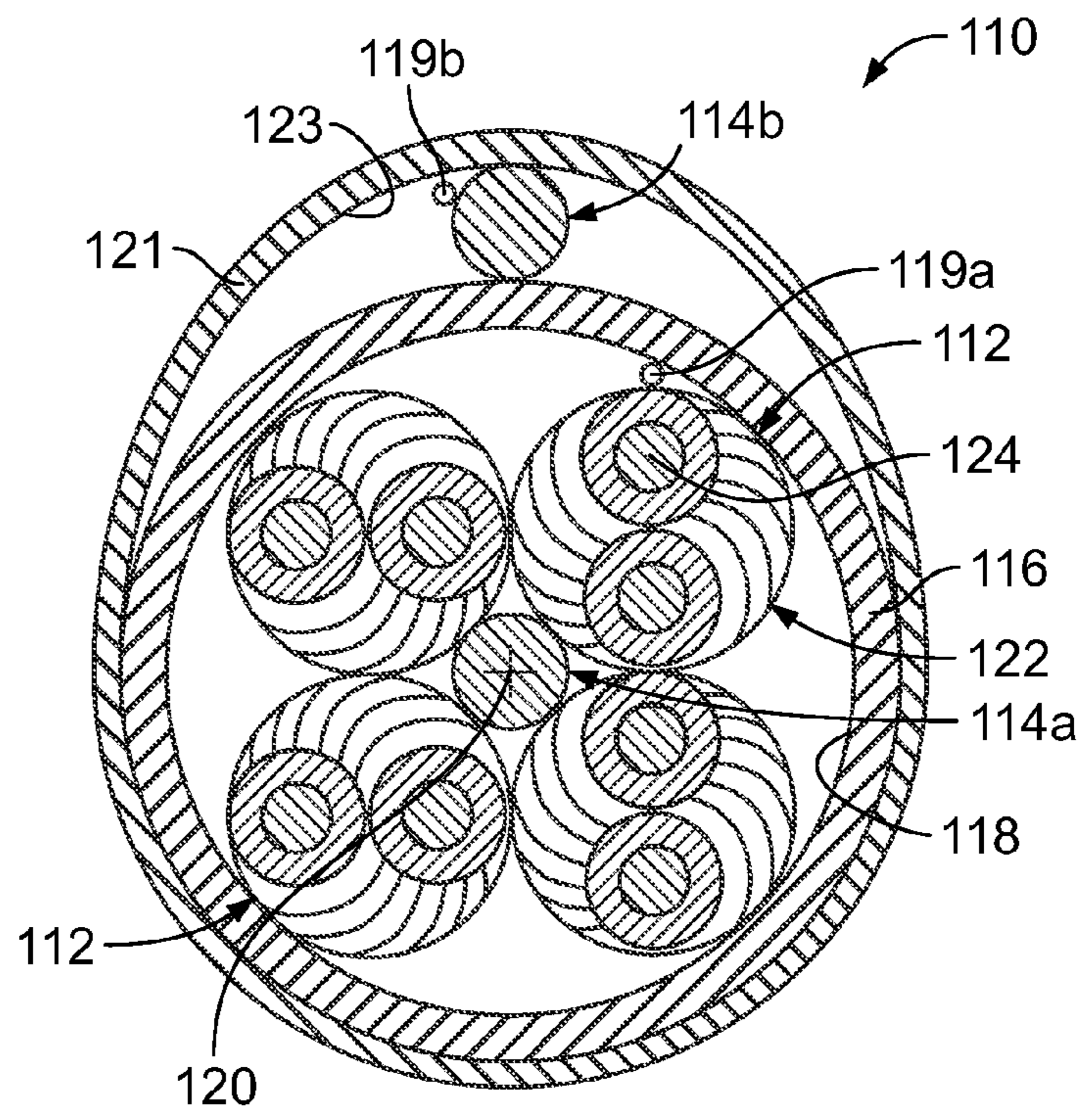


FIG. 2

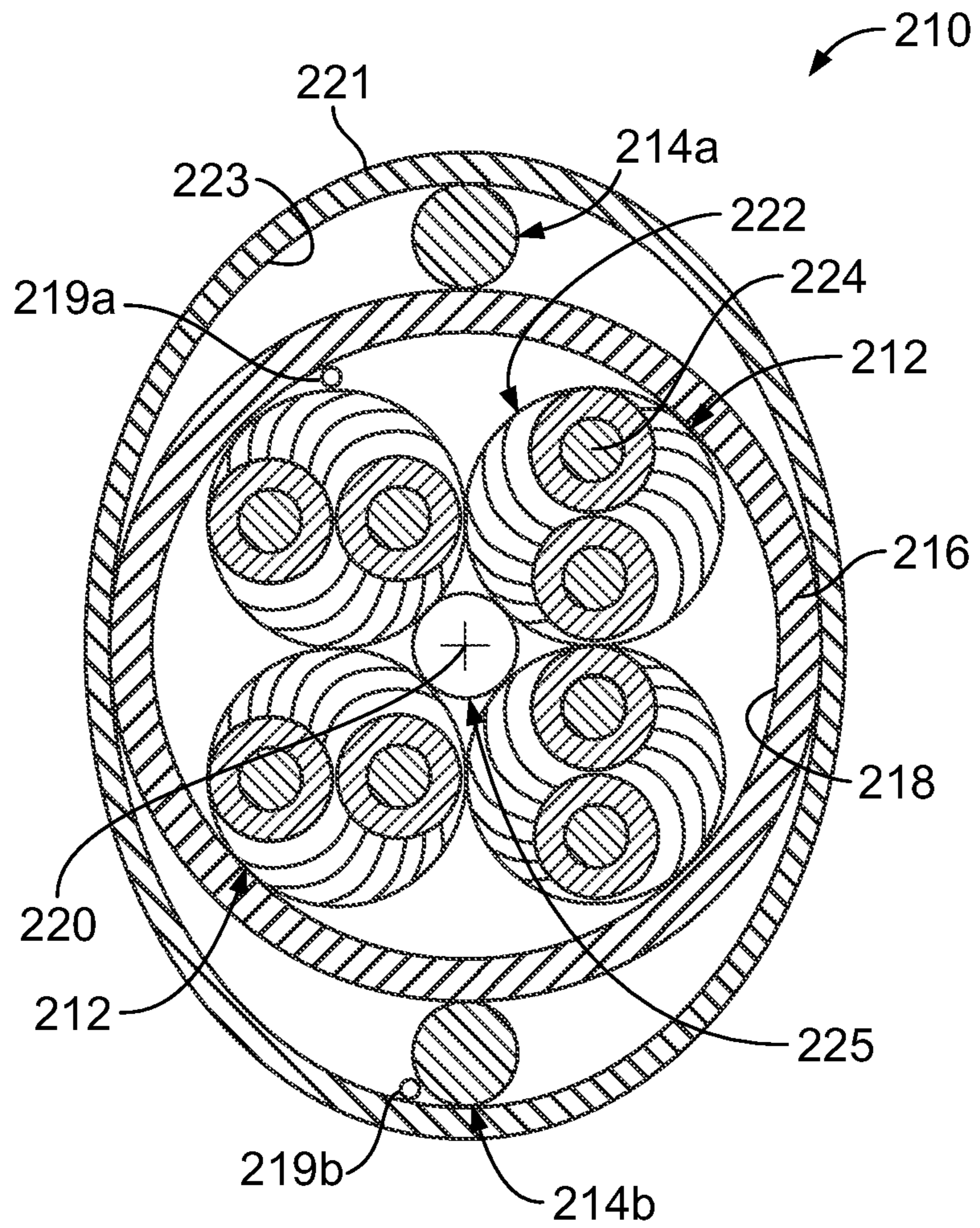


FIG. 3

1

ELECTRICAL CABLE WITH OPTICAL FIBER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The subject matter described and/or illustrated herein relates generally to electrical cables.

Some known data communication cables include pairs of insulated electrical conductors that are twisted together to form a balanced transmission line. Such pairs of insulated conductors are commonly referred to as “twisted pairs.” One example of a data communication cable includes multiple twisted pairs that are bundled and twisted, or cabled, together and covered with a jacket.

It may sometimes be desirable to provide a secure electrical cable to prevent an unauthorized breach of the data being transmitted along the electrical cable. For example, electrical cables used for many military and government communications are monitored and/or secured to prevent the cables from being tapped into by an unauthorized person or entity. But, known monitoring and/or securing methods for electrical cables having twisted pairs are not without disadvantages. One known method for securing electrical cables having twisted pairs includes enclosing the electrical cable in a secure conduit that cannot be tapped into without considerable difficulty. However, enclosing electrical cables in such a secure conduit may be expensive, time-consuming, and/or difficult, for example due to a required robustness of the secure conduit. A known method for monitoring the security of an electrical cable having twisted pairs includes visually inspecting the cable along the length thereof to determine if the cable has been tapped into. But, visually inspecting the length of an electrical cable may take a considerable amount of time, which may result in a delayed determination that the cable has been breached. Moreover, the time-consuming nature of such visual inspection may be prone to operator error and/or may unnecessarily tie up worker capacity.

Accordingly, there is a need for an improved monitoring and/or securing electrical cables having twisted pairs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In one embodiment, an electrical cable includes a cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the cable jacket. Twisted pairs of insulated electrical conductors extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. Each twisted pair includes two insulated electrical conductors twisted together in a helical manner. At least two optical fibers extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. The optical fibers are independently held within the internal passageway of the cable jacket relative to each other.

In another embodiment, an electrical cable includes a cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the cable jacket. Twisted pairs of insulated electrical conductors extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. Each twisted pair includes two insulated electrical conductors twisted together in a helical manner. At least one optical fiber extends within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. The at least one optical fiber is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable.

In another embodiment, an electrical cable includes a cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the cable jacket. Electrical conductors extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. The electrical conductors are con-

2

figured to conduct data signals. At least two optical fibers extend within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket. The optical fibers are independently held within the internal passageway of the cable jacket relative to each other.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a cross section of an exemplary embodiment of an electrical cable.

FIG. 2 is a cross-section of another exemplary embodiment of an electrical cable.

FIG. 3 is a cross-section of another exemplary embodiment of an electrical cable.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 is a cross section of the an exemplary embodiment of an electrical cable **10**. The cable **10** includes a central core **12**, one or more optical fibers **14a** and **14b**, and a jacket **16**. Optionally, the cable **10** includes a rip cord **19** for exposing various internal components of the cable **10**, for example to enable termination of such components. The cable **10** extends a length along a central longitudinal axis **20**. The jacket **16** extends around the central core **12** and the optical fibers **14a** and **14b**. More specifically, the jacket **16** extends a length along the length of the cable **10** and includes an internal passageway **18** that extends along the length of the jacket **16**. The central core **12** and the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** extend within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16** along the length of the jacket **16**. As will be described below, at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable **10**. The jacket **16** may be referred to herein as a “cable jacket”.

The central core **12** includes a group of a plurality of twisted pairs **22** of insulated electrical conductors **24**. Alternatively, the cable **10** includes a plurality of electrical conductors **24** that are not twisted into twisted pairs. Each electrical conductor **24** is surrounded by an insulative layer **28**. Optionally, each of the twisted pairs **22** includes an electrical shield (not shown) that extends therearound. The electrical shield of each twisted pair **22** may be fabricated from any electrically conductive materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, an electrically conductive foil (e.g., a metal foil and/or the like), an electrically conductive tape (e.g., a metal tape and/or the like), and/or the like. In some embodiments, the conductors **24** of the twisted pairs are configured to conduct data signals. The twisted pairs **22** extend within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16** along the length of the jacket **16**. Optionally, the central core **12** includes a binder element (not shown) that extends around the group of twisted pairs **22** to hold the twisted pairs **22** together around the central longitudinal axis **20**. The binder element is wrapped around the twisted pairs **22** to thereby hold the twisted pairs **22** together in the group, with the binder element forming the radially-outermost (relative to the central longitudinal axis **20**) component of the central core **12**. The binder element may be fabricated from any materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, a dielectric tape, an electrically conductive material (e.g., an electrically conductive foil, an electrically conductive tape, and/or the like such as, but not limited to, a metal foil, a metal tape, and/or the like), and/or the like. When fabricated from an electrically conductive material, the binder element may provide electrical shielding to the central core **12**. The materials, structures, and/or the like of the binder element may be selected to comply with any applicable fire safety standards.

The two insulated conductors **24** of each twisted pair **22** are twisted together in a helical manner. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, the two insulated conductors **24** of each twisted pair **22** are twisted around each other in a clockwise direction. The clockwise wrapping direction is commonly referred to as a “right hand lay direction”. Alternatively, the two insulated conductors **24** of one or more of the twisted pairs **22** are twisted around each other in a counter-clockwise direction. The counter-clockwise wrapping direction is commonly referred to as a “left hand lay direction”.

Optionally, the twisted pairs **22** of the central core **12** extend along helical paths around the central longitudinal axis **20**. In other words, each of the twisted pairs **22** is optionally wound into winding turns that extend around the central longitudinal axis **20**. Each twisted pair **22** may be wrapped around the central longitudinal axis **20** in the clockwise or the counter-clockwise direction. The winding turns of the twisted pairs **22** may be interleaved between each other. In other embodiments, the twisted pairs **22** extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis **20** instead of a helical path. Although four twisted pairs **22** are shown, the central core **12** may include any number of the twisted pairs **22**.

In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, the cable **10** includes two optical fibers **14a** and **14b**. However, the cable **10** may include any number of optical fibers. In some embodiments, the cable **10** only includes a single optical fiber (e.g., the optical fiber **14a** or the optical fiber **14b**). The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** extend within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16** along the length of the jacket **16**. Each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** consists of an optically transmissive strand **30**, which is optionally coated with one or more insulation layers **32**. The strand **30** may be fabricated from any optically transmissive material, such as, but not limited to, a glass, a polymer, a plastic, and/or the like. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** consists of the strand **30** and a single insulation layer **32** coated on the strand **30**. Optionally, another insulation layer (not shown), which may be different from the insulation layer **32**, is coated on the insulation layer **32**. The insulation layers **32** may be fabricated from any insulative materials, such as, but not limited to, a plastic, a polymer, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), fluorinated ethylene propylene (FEP), polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), polyethylene (PE) PE, and/or the like. Each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** may have any diameter, such as, but not limited to, a diameter of between approximately 200 μm and approximately 1000 μm . Each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** includes an outer surface (which is defined by an outermost insulation layer **32** if included) that may engage one or more of the twisted pairs **22**. Each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** may be considered “sleeveless”.

The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are independently held within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16** relative to each other. By “independently held”, it is meant that the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are not held within a common insulative sub-jacket (not shown) of the cable **10**. In other words, optical fibers that are independently held are not bundled together within a common jacket that extends within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16**.

As briefly described above, at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable **10**. More specifically, at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** is configured to change the optical transmission characteristics thereof in response to a mechanical disturbance to the electrical cable **10**. For example, at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** may be configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable **10** by communicating an optical signal change along the optical

fiber **14a** and/or **14b**, for example based on flexing of the optical fiber **14a** and/or **14b** when an attempt is made to cut into, grasp, pull on, lift, and/or the like the electrical cable. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, each of the two optical fibers **14a** and **14b** is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable **10**. Alternatively, at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** of the electrical cable **10** is used to transmit data signals, so long as at least one of the optical fibers **14a** and/or **14b** of the cable **10** is configured to sense a disturbance to the cable **10**.

Each of the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may be positioned anywhere within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16**. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** extends between the twisted pairs **22** of the central core **12**. In other words, the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** of FIG. 1 are positioned radially (relative to the central longitudinal axis **20**) between the axis **20** and the twisted pairs **22** such that the twisted pairs **22** extend around the optical fibers **14a** and **14b**. The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** therefore extend through the central core **12** in the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1. The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may be arranged between the twisted pairs **22** in any other pattern than is shown in FIG. 1. Optionally, the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are engaged with each other. The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may provide a central filler element between the twisted pairs, which may facilitate providing the cable **10** and/or the central core **12** with a predetermined shape (e.g., a circular cross-sectional shape). The diameter, number of, and arrangement of the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may be selected to facilitate providing the cable **10** and/or the central core **12** with the predetermined shape.

The optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are optionally twisted around each other in a helical manner, whether in the clockwise or counter-clockwise direction. When twisted together, the twisted optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may extend along a helical path (whether clockwise or counter-clockwise) around the central longitudinal axis or may extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis **20** instead of a helical path. When the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are not twisted together, each optical fiber **14a** and **14b** may extend along a helical path around the central longitudinal axis **20** or may extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis **20** instead of a helical path.

Optionally, the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** are optically connected to each other. For example, ends (not shown) of the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** may be optically connected to each other at an end (not shown) of the electrical cable **10**. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 1, the optical fibers include two discrete optical fibers **14a** and **14b**. In an alternative embodiment, the optical fibers **14a** and **14b** represent segments of the length of the same optical fiber that are connected together at a loop (not shown) of the optical fiber. In such an alternative embodiment wherein the electrical cable **10** includes an optical fiber having segments **14a** and **14b** that are connected together at a loop, the segments **14a** and **14b** are independently held within the internal passageway **18** of the jacket **16**.

The conductors **24** of the twisted pairs **22** may be fabricated from any conductive materials, such as, but not limited to, bare copper, tinned plated copper, silver plated copper, and/or the like. Each conductor **24** may be formed from any number of strands of material. The insulative layers **28** are fabricated from any insulative, non-conductive materials, such as, but not limited to, polypropylene, FEP, polytetrafluoroethylene-perfluoromethylvinylether (MFA), PE, and/or the like. The jacket **16** may be fabricated from any at least partially dielectric materials, such as, but not limited to, a polymer, PVC, low

5

smoke zero halogen PVC, FEP, polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), PE, nylon, and/or the like. Optionally, the jacket 16 is formed using an extrusion process. In some embodiments, the jacket 16 is formed from a yarn, a tape, and/or the like.

FIG. 2 is a cross section of another exemplary alternative embodiment of an electrical cable 110. The cable 110 includes a central core 112, two optical fibers 114a and 114b, an inner jacket 116, and an outer jacket 121. The cable 110 includes optional rip cords 119a and/or 119b for exposing various internal components of the cable 110, for example to enable termination of such components. The cable 110 extends a length along a central longitudinal axis 120. The inner jacket 116 extends around the central core 112 and one of the optical fibers 114a. The inner jacket 116 extends a length along the length of the cable 110 and includes an internal passageway 118 that extends along the length of the inner jacket 116. The central core 112 and the optical fiber 114a extend within the internal passageway 118 of the inner jacket 116 along the length of the inner jacket 116. The outer jacket 121 extends around the inner jacket 116. More specifically, the outer jacket 121 includes an internal passageway 123 within which the inner jacket 116, the central core 112, and the optical fiber 114a extend. Another of the optical fibers 114b extends between the inner and outer jackets 116 and 121, respectively. The inner jacket 116 may be referred to herein as an “inner cable jacket”. The outer jacket 121 may be referred to herein as an “outer cable jacket”.

The central core 112 includes a group of a plurality of twisted pairs 122 of insulated electrical conductors 124. Alternatively, the cable 110 includes a plurality of electrical conductors 124 that are not twisted into twisted pairs. Optionally, each of the twisted pairs 122 includes an electrical shield (not shown) that extends therearound. The electrical shield of each twisted pair 122 may be fabricated from any electrically conductive materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, an electrically conductive foil (e.g., a metal foil and/or the like), an electrically conductive tape (e.g., a metal tape and/or the like), and/or the like. In some embodiments, the conductors 124 of the twisted pairs 122 are configured to conduct data signals. The twisted pairs 122 extend within the internal passageway 118 of the inner jacket 116 such that the inner jacket 116 surrounds the twisted pairs 122. Optionally, the central core 112 includes a binder element (not shown) that extends around the group of twisted pairs 122 to hold the twisted pairs 122 together around the central longitudinal axis 120. The binder element is wrapped around the twisted pairs 122 to thereby hold the twisted pairs 122 together in the group, with the binder element forming the radially-outermost (relative to the central longitudinal axis 120) component of the central core 112. The binder element may be fabricated from any materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, a dielectric tape, an electrically conductive material (e.g., an electrically conductive foil, an electrically conductive tape, and/or the like such as, but not limited to, a metal foil, a metal tape, and/or the like), and/or the like. When fabricated from an electrically conductive material, the binder element may provide electrical shielding to the central core 112. The materials, structures, and/or the like of the binder element may be selected to comply with any applicable fire safety standards. Although four twisted pairs 122 are shown, the central core 112 may include any number of the twisted pairs 122.

In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 2, the cable 110 includes two optical fibers 114a and 114b. However, the cable 110 may include any number of the optical fibers. The optical fibers 114a and 114b are independently held within the internal passageway 123 of the outer jacket 121 relative to each

6

other. By “independently held”, it is meant that optical fibers 114a and 114b are not held within a common insulative sub-jacket (not shown) of the cable 110. In other words, optical fibers that are independently held are not bundled together within a common jacket that extends within the internal passageway 123 of the outer jacket 121. In some embodiments, the cable 110 includes only a single optical fiber 114a or 114b. Each optical fiber 114a and 114b may be considered “sleeveless”.

In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 2, the optical fiber 114a extends within the internal passageway 118 of the inner jacket 116 along the length of the jacket 116. The optical fiber 114a extends between the twisted pairs 122 of the central core 112. The optical fiber 114a is positioned radially (relative to the central longitudinal axis 120) between the axis 120 and the twisted pairs 122 such that the twisted pairs 122 extend around the optical fiber 114a. The optical fiber 114a may extend along a helical path around the central longitudinal axis 120 or may extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis 120 instead of a helical path. The optical fiber 114a may provide a central filler element between the twisted pairs, which may facilitate providing the cable 110 and/or the central core 112 with a predetermined shape (e.g., a circular cross-sectional shape). The diameter, number of, and arrangement of the optical fiber 114a may be selected to facilitate providing the cable 110 and/or the central core 112 with the predetermined shape. The optical fiber 114a includes an outer surface (which is defined by an outermost insulation layer if included) that may engage one or more of the twisted pairs 122.

The optical fiber 114b extends between the inner and outer jackets 116 and 121, respectively. More specifically, the optical fiber 114b is positioned radially (relative to the central longitudinal axis 120) between the inner and outer jackets 118 and 121, respectively. The outer jacket 121 surrounds the optical fiber 114b, which extends around the inner jacket 116. The optical fiber 114b may extend along a helical path around the inner jacket 116 (and around the central longitudinal axis 120) or may extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis 120 instead of a helical path. The optical fiber 114b may provide a spacing element that facilitates spacing the twisted pairs 122 apart from neighboring electrical devices (e.g., the twisted pairs of a neighboring cable (not shown)). The diameter, number of, and arrangement of the optical fiber 114b may be selected to facilitate providing the cable 110 and/or the central core 112 with the predetermined shape. The optical fiber 114b includes an outer surface (which is defined by an outermost insulation layer if included) that may engage the inner jacket 116 and/or the outer jacket 121.

At least one of the optical fibers 114a and/or 114b is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable 110. More specifically, at least one of the optical fibers 114a and/or 114b is configured to change the optical transmission characteristics thereof in response to a mechanical disturbance to the electrical cable 110. In some embodiments, at least one of the optical fibers 114a and/or 114b of the electrical cable 110 is used to transmit data signals.

Optionally, the optical fibers 114a and 114b are optically connected to each other. For example, ends (not shown) of the optical fibers 114a and 114b may be optically connected to each other at an end (not shown) of the electrical cable 110. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 2, the optical fibers include two discrete optical fibers 114a and 114b. In an alternative embodiment, 114a and 114b represent segments of the length of the same optical fiber that are connected together at a loop (not shown) of the optical fiber. In such an alternative embodiment wherein the electrical cable 110

includes an optical fiber having segments **114a** and **114b** that are connected together at a loop, the segments **114a** and **114b** are independently held within the internal passageway **123** of the outer jacket **121**.

The inner and outer jackets **116** and **121**, respectively, may each be fabricated from any at least partially dielectric materials, such as, but not limited to, a polymer, PVC, low smoke zero halogen PVC, FEP, polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), PE, nylon, and/or the like. In some embodiments, the inner jacket **116** and/or the outer jacket **121** is formed using an extrusion process. Moreover, in some embodiments, the inner jacket **116** and/or the outer jacket **121** is formed from a yarn, a tape, and/or the like. When formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, the inner jacket **116** and/or the outer jacket **121** may not be continuous along the length thereof, such that gaps extend within the jacket **116** and/or **121** (for example between adjacent winding turns, or wraps, of the tape, yarn, and/or the like). If formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, any gaps within the outer jacket **121** may expose portions of the optical fiber **114b**. When the outer jacket **121** is formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, the optical fiber **114b** may be considered to be “lashed” to the inner jacket **116** using the yarn, tape, and/or the like of the outer jacket **121**.

FIG. 3 is a cross section of another exemplary alternative embodiment of an electrical cable **210**. The cable **210** includes a central core **212**, two optical fibers **214a** and **214b**, an inner jacket **216**, and an outer jacket **221**. The cable **210** includes optional rip cords **219a** and/or **219b** for exposing various internal components of the cable **210**, for example to enable termination of such components. The cable **210** extends a length along a central longitudinal axis **220**. The inner jacket **216** extends around the central core **212**. The inner jacket **216** includes an internal passageway **218** within which the central core **212** extends. The outer jacket **221** extends around the inner jacket **216**. The outer jacket **221** includes an internal passageway **223** within which the optical fibers **214a** and **214b**, the inner jacket **216**, and the central core **212** extend. The inner jacket **216** may be referred to herein as an “inner cable jacket”. The outer jacket **221** may be referred to herein as an “outer cable jacket”.

The central core **212** includes a group of a plurality of twisted pairs **222** of insulated electrical conductors **224**. Alternatively, the cable **210** includes a plurality of electrical conductors **224** that are not twisted into twisted pairs. Optionally, each of the twisted pairs **222** includes an electrical shield (not shown) that extends therearound. The electrical shield of each twisted pair **222** may be fabricated from any electrically conductive materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, an electrically conductive foil (e.g., a metal foil and/or the like), an electrically conductive tape (e.g., a metal tape and/or the like), and/or the like. In some embodiments, the conductors **224** of the twisted pairs **222** are configured to conduct data signals. The twisted pairs **222** extend within the internal passageway **218** of the inner jacket **216** such that the inner jacket **216** surrounds the twisted pairs **222**. Although four twisted pairs **222** are shown, the central core **212** may include any number of the twisted pairs **222**.

Optionally, the central core **212** includes a binder element (not shown) that extends around the group of twisted pairs **222** to hold the twisted pairs **222** together around the central longitudinal axis **220**. The binder element is wrapped around the twisted pairs **222** to thereby hold the twisted pairs **222** together in the group, with the binder element forming the radially-outermost (relative to the central longitudinal axis **220**) component of the central core **212**. The binder element may be fabricated from any materials, structures, and/or the like, such as, but not limited to, a dielectric tape, an electri-

cally conductive material (e.g. an electrically conductive foil, an electrically conductive tape, and/or the like such as, but not limited to, a metal foil, a metal tape, and/or the like), and/or the like. When fabricated from an electrically conductive material, the binder element may provide electrical shielding to the central core **212**. The materials, structures, and/or the like of the binder element may be selected to comply with any applicable fire safety standards. An optional central filler element **225** extends between the twisted pairs **222**. Optionally, the central filler element **225** is fabricated from a flat tape, such as, but not limited to, an aluminum tape, an aluminum/polyester tape, and/or the like.

Although two are shown, the cable **210** may include any number of the optical fibers **214a** and **214b**. The cable **210** includes two optical fibers **214a** and **214b** that are independently held within the internal passageway **223** of the outer jacket **221** relative to each other. By “independently held”, it is meant that optical fibers **214a** and **214b** are not held within a common insulative sub jacket (not shown) of the cable **210**. In other words, optical fibers that are independently held are not bundled together within a common jacket that extends within the internal passageway **223** of the outer jacket **221**. In some embodiments, the cable **210** includes only a single optical fiber **214a** or **214b**. Each optical fiber **214a** and **214b** may be considered “sleeveless”.

The optical fibers **214a** and **214b** extend between the inner and outer jackets **216** and **221**, respectively. More specifically, the optical fibers **214a** and **214b** are each positioned radially (relative to the central longitudinal axis **220**) between the inner and outer jackets **216** and **221**, respectively. The outer jacket **221** surrounds the optical fibers **214a** and **214b**, which extend around the inner jacket **216**. The optical fibers **214a** and **214b** may each extend along a helical path around the inner jacket **216** (and around the central longitudinal axis **220**) or may extend along a path that is parallel to the central longitudinal axis **220** instead of a helical path.

In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 3, the optical fibers **214a** and **214b** are arranged approximately 180° from each other about the circumference of the inner jacket **216**. However, the optical fibers **214a** and **214b** may be arranged between the inner jacket **216** and the outer jacket **221** in any other pattern than is shown in FIG. 3. For example, in some embodiments, the optical fiber **214a** is arranged approximately 90° from the optical fiber **214b** about the circumference of the inner jacket **216**. The optical fibers **214a** and **214b** may provide spacing elements that facilitates spacing the twisted pairs **222** apart from neighboring electrical devices (e.g., the twisted pairs of a neighboring cable (not shown)). The diameter, number of, and arrangement of the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b** may be selected to facilitate providing the cable **210** and/or the central core **212** with a predetermined shape (e.g., a circular cross-sectional shape). For example, in some embodiments, the cable **210** includes four optical fibers arranged approximately 90° relative to each other around the circumference of the inner jacket **216** to provide the cable **210** with a circular cross-sectional shape.

At least one of the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b** is configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable **210**. More specifically, at least one of the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b** is configured to change the optical transmission characteristics thereof in response to a mechanical disturbance to the electrical cable **210**. In some embodiments, at least one of the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b** of the electrical cable **210** is used to transmit data signals.

Optionally, the optical fibers **214a** and **214b** are optically connected to each other. For example, ends (not shown) of the optical fibers **214a** and **214b** may be optically connected to

each other at an end (not shown) of the electrical cable **210**. In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. **3**, the optical fibers include two discrete optical fibers **214a** and **214b**. In an alternative embodiment, **214a** and **214b** represent segments of the length of the same optical fiber that are connected together at a loop (not shown) of the optical fiber. In such an alternative embodiment wherein the electrical cable **210** includes an optical fiber having segments **214a** and **214b** that are connected together at a loop, the segments **214a** and **214b** are independently held within the internal passageway **223** of the outer jacket **221**.

The inner and outer jackets **216** and **221**, respectively, may each be fabricated from any at least partially dielectric materials, such as, but not limited to, a polymer, PVC, low smoke zero halogen PVC, FEP, polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF), PE, nylon, and/or the like. In some embodiments, the inner jacket **216** and/or the outer jacket **221** is formed using an extrusion process. Moreover, in some embodiments, the inner jacket **216** and/or the outer jacket **221** is formed from a yarn, a tape, and/or the like. When formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, the inner jacket **216** and/or the outer jacket **221** may not be continuous along the length thereof, such that gaps extend within the jacket **216** and/or **221** (for example between adjacent winding turns, or wraps, of the tape, yarn, and/or the like). If formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, any gaps within the outer jacket **221** may expose portions of the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b**. When the outer jacket **221** is formed from a yarn, tape, and/or the like, the optical fibers **214a** and/or **214b** may be considered to be “lashed” to the inner jacket **216** using the yarn, tape, and/or the like of the outer jacket **221**.

The embodiments described and/or illustrated herein may provide a secure electrical cable. For example, the embodiments described and/or illustrated herein may provide an electrical cable having electrical conductors for conducting data signal and having an optical fiber for monitoring a security of the cable by sensing a disturbance to the electrical cable. The embodiments described and/or illustrated herein may provide an electrical cable having twisted pairs for conducting data signals and an optical fiber for monitoring a security of the cable by sensing a disturbance to the electrical cable, for example. Moreover, and for example, by using one or more optical fibers that are independently held within a jacket of the cable, instead of being grouped under a common sub-jacket, the embodiments described and/or illustrated herein may provide an electrical cable having both electrical conductors and optical fibers that is smaller than at least some known electrical cables.

In the above description, the cables **10**, **110**, and **210** are described and/or illustrated in terms of premise cabling, such as, but not limited to, a data communication cable and/or the like. However, it is to be understood that the subject matter described and/or illustrated herein are also applicable to other types of cables, including, but not limited to, wires, cords, cables, and/or the like of any type. The foregoing description and illustrations are therefore provided for illustrative purposes only and are but one potential application of the subject matter described and/or illustrated herein.

It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and not restrictive. For example, the above-described embodiments (and/or aspects thereof) may be used in combination with each other. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the subject matter described and/or illustrated herein without departing from its scope. Dimensions, types of materials, orientations of the various components, and the number and positions of the various components

described and/or illustrated herein are intended to define parameters of certain embodiments, and are by no means limiting and are merely exemplary embodiments. Many other embodiments and modifications within the spirit and scope of the claims will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description and the drawings. The scope of the subject matter described and/or illustrated herein should, therefore, be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled. In the appended claims, the terms “including” and “in which” are used as the plain-English equivalents of the respective terms “comprising” and “wherein.” Moreover, in the following claims, the terms “first,” “second,” and “third,” etc. are used merely as labels, and are not intended to impose numerical requirements on their objects. Further, the limitations of the following claims are not written in means—plus-function format and are not intended to be interpreted based on 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph, unless and until such claim limitations expressly use the phrase “means for” followed by a statement of function void of further structure.

What is claimed is:

1. An electrical cable comprising:

a cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the cable jacket;

twisted pairs of insulated electrical conductors extending within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket, each twisted pair comprising two insulated electrical conductors twisted together in a helical manner; and

at least two optical fibers extending within the internal passageway along the length of the cable jacket, wherein the optical fibers are independently held within the internal passageway of the cable jacket relative to each other, wherein an outer surface of at least one of the optical fibers is engaged with at least one of the twisted pairs.

2. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein the optical fibers are not held within a common sub-jacket that extends within the internal passageway of the cable jacket.

3. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein the cable jacket is an outer cable jacket, the cable further comprising an inner cable jacket extending within the internal passageway of the outer jacket, the inner cable jacket surrounding the twisted pairs and a first of the optical fibers, a second of the optical fibers extending between the inner and outer jackets.

4. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein at least one of the optical fibers is located in the internal passageway between the twisted pairs.

5. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein the twisted pairs are configured to conduct data signals.

6. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein the optical fibers are optically connected together.

7. The electrical cable of claim **1**, wherein at least one of the optical fibers comprises an insulative coating.

8. An electrical cable comprising:

an outer cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the outer cable jacket;

twisted pairs of insulated electrical conductors extending within the internal passageway along the length of the outer cable jacket, each twisted pair comprising two insulated electrical conductors twisted together in a helical manner;

11

at least first and second optical fibers extending within the internal passageway along the length of the outer cable jacket, at least one of the first optical fiber or the second optical fiber being configured to sense a disturbance to the electrical cable; and

an inner cable jacket extending within the internal passageway of the outer cable jacket, the inner cable jacket surrounding the twisted pairs and the first optical fiber, the second optical fiber extending between the inner and outer cable jackets.

9. The electrical cable of claim **8**, wherein the first optical fiber is located within the internal passageway between the twisted pairs.

10. The electrical cable of claim **8**, wherein the twisted pairs are configured to conduct data signals.

11. The electrical cable of claim **8**, wherein at least one of the first optical fiber or the second optical fiber comprises an insulative coating.

12. The electrical cable of claim **8**, wherein the at least one of the first optical fiber or the second optical fiber is configured to sense the disturbance to the electrical cable by communicating an optical signal change along the at least one of the first optical fiber or the second optical fiber.

13. The electrical cable of claim **8**, wherein an outer surface of the first optical fiber is engaged with at least one of the twisted pairs.

12

14. An electrical cable comprising:

an outer cable jacket extending a length and having an internal passageway that extends along the length of the outer cable jacket;

electrical conductors extending within the internal passageway along the length of the outer cable jacket, the electrical conductors being configured to conduct data signals;

at least two optical fibers extending within the internal passageway along the length of the outer cable jacket, wherein the at least two optical fibers are independently held within the internal passageway of the outer cable jacket relative to each other; and

an inner cable jacket extending within the internal passageway of the outer cable jacket, the inner cable jacket surrounding the electrical conductors, at least one of the at least two optical fibers extending between the inner and outer cable jackets.

15. The electrical cable of claim **14**, wherein the optical fibers are not held within a common sub-jacket that extends within the internal passageway of the outer cable jacket.

16. The electrical cable of claim **14**, wherein the at least two optical fibers comprise first and second optical fibers, the first and second optical fibers extending between the inner and outer cable jackets.

* * * * *